

Double mint mark is a lucky punch on 1972-D cent

By Roger Boye

HERE ARE the answers to some questions from Tribune readers.

Q—My eyes may be playing tricks on me, but I'm almost certain the mint mark on my 1972-D cent is "doubled." Did the guys at the mint make a mistake? I got the coin in a Loop cigar store on my birthday.

T.M., Chicago

A—United States Mint employees strike a punch two or three times to add the mint mark to a steel die that then is used to make coins. If they move the punch even slightly between strikes, the mint mark may appear doubled or even tripled. More exotic variations include a vertical over horizontal mint mark, or a dual mint mark (D over S, for example).

A 1972-D cent with a double-punched D is worth about \$2, says coin error expert Alan Herbert.

Q—Please help settle an argument I've had with a friend in school. Have any living Americans appeared on our coins? I say no; he says yes, but can't name names.

K. W., Rockford

A—Yes, but only on commemorative half dollars made earlier this century. Three examples are President Coolidge on the 1926 Sesquicentennial of American Independence half dollar; T. E. Kilby, governor of Alabama during the state's 1919 centennial, on the Alabama centennial half dollar issued in 1921; and Sen. Carter Glass on the Lynchburg, Va., Sesquicentennial half dollar of 1936.

Curiously, Glass complained about

having portraits of living men on coins, but his likeness was put on the half dollar over his objections, according to R. S. Yeoman in the Red Book.

Q—I'm building a coin display and need to know if Lincoln was the first American President to be put on a coin.

J. S., Decatur

A—George Washington wins the blue ribbon for having been on the so-called Lafayette dollar of 1900, a commemorative coin. Abraham Lincoln was the first President to make it on a regular circulating coin; the Lincoln cent has been made since 1909.

Q—Please explain the origin of the term "two bits." My supervisor uses it all the time.

F. B., Chicago

A—Spanish coins circulated in this country until they were outlawed in 1857. The Spanish *one real* piece, worth one-eighth of the Spanish dollar, became known as a "bit," especially in the West. By the mid-19th Century, "two bits" was a popular expression for the U.S. quarter.

IF YOU want to know the value of old coins you have stashed away, take them to the coin origin and evaluation booth at the Morton Grove Coin Club's annual show April 30 at the Holiday Inn, 5300 W. Touhy Av., Skokie. There is no charge for this service by club members using the latest reference books, but "No entire collections or large accumulations, please," the show's organizer asks.

Dealers will be present to buy and sell coins. The show, open to the public, will run from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.